THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T. R. BAALU): (a) The tea gardens have been excluded from forest cover in Assam and other parts of the country in forest cover assessment by Forest Survey of India, Dehradun because tea cultivation is not a forest land use.

(b) In compliance of the Supreme Court's order, the Ministry of Environment and Forests have issued directions in the month of May & October, 2002 respectively to the various State Governments and Union Territory Administrations to deal with the issue of the encroachments seriously and evict the ineligible encroachers from the forest lands in a time bound manner as per the guidelines of Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980. Also, the Ministry has advised the various State Governments/UT Administrations that the eviction process should be monitored at the highest level and accountability should be fixed for in action.

(c) National Forest Policy, 1988 envisages a minimum of one third of the total land area of the country under forest or tree cover. In the hills and mountainous regions, the aim should be to maintain two third of the area under such cover in order to prevent erosion and land degradation and to ensure the stability of the fragile eco-system. As per the latest assessment of Forest Survey of India, the State of Assam has 30.2 % of the total geographical area under forest cover.

Anarchy in Ranthambore wild life sanctuary

379. SHRI RAMA SHANKER KAUSHIK: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether great anarchy prevails in the world famous Ranthambore wild life sanctuary due to which death of the animals, reduction in the number of tourists and abnormal situation thereof continue;

(b) whether there is a much more irregularity in the assistance received from the World Bank for the protection of environment and development of the sanctuary; and

(c) if so, whether Government are considering to take any effective steps to protect animals, to increase the number of tourists and to restore normalcy alongwith to examine the financial position; if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T. R. BAALU) (a) No, Sir.

(b) No such cases of irregularity in the assistance received from the World Bank under the India Eco Development Project have come to the notice of the Central Government.

(c) Central assistance under the schemes namely 'Project Tiger' and 'India Eco Development Project' is provided to the State Government for the proper management of the Ranthambore Tiger Reserve which includes assistance for the activities related to protection of wild animals and development of habitat. Due to prevailing drought conditions in Rajasthan this year, the Central Government has provided an additional central assistance of Rs. 45.00 lakhs for providing fodder and water facilities in the adjoining villages of the Reserve, out of which Rs. 25.00 lakhs has been released as the first instalment.

Studies on rivers under National River Action Plan

380. SHRI KRIPAL PARMAR: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) how many studies by different institutions have been conducted on Beas, Sutlej and Yamuna rivers and also on rejuvenation of Rivalsar Lake in district Mandi in Himachal Pradesh under the National River Action Plan alongwith field testing laboratory sanitation survey etc., and how many proposals are pending with the Central Government for the allocation of funds for them and since when;

(b) what are the reasons for non-allocation of funds for them so far; and

(c) by when funds would be allocated for them?